

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6339
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PORT LOUIS 1104

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT MP
SUBJECT: MAURITIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: HOW THEY LOOK
THE WEEK BEFORE

REF: PORT LOUIS 1100

SUMMARY: REFTEL PROVIDED A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ELECTORAL SITUATION IN MAURITIUS A WEEK BEFORE THE VOTERS GO TO THE POLLS ON DECEMBER 20. THE RACE IS BETWEEN THREE MAJOR PARTIES, WITH THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY (IP) STAKING OUT THE CENTER GROUND BETWEEN THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) ON THE LEFT AND THE MAURITIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PMSD) ON THE RIGHT. THIS CABLE ANALYZES THE CONSIDERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS UNDERLYING THE CONCLUSIONS PRESENTED IN REFTEL. END SUMMARY

1. AS WE ENTER THE HOME-STRETCH OF THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IT IS READILY APPARENT THAT THERE ARE ONLY THREE VIABLE ANTAGONISTS IN THE RACE: THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY (COALITION OF LABOR AND THE MUSLIM COMMITTEE FOR ACTION), THE MMM (MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT), AND THE PMSD (MAURITIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY). THE SMALLER PARTIES TOGETHER WILL AT BEST ELECT TWO OR THREE OF THEIR BEST-KNOWN LEADERS, FOR EXAMPLT, MAURICE LESAGE OF THE MAURITIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (UDM) AND SOOKDEO BISSOONDOYAL OF THE INDEPENDENT FORWARD BLOC (IFB). THE MAJOR INFLUENCE OF THE SMALLER PARTIES ON THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE TO DRAW VOTERS AWAY FROM
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THE LARGE PARTIES FROM WHICH THEY SPRANG IN MOST CASES:

THE UDM CUTTING INTO THE PMSD'S VOTE, THE MMMSP STEALING VOTES FROM THE MMM, AND THE IFB AND HAWOLDAR'S NEW PSP TAKING VOTES FROM THE IP. THE MANY INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES ARE APPARENTLY JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE.

2. SINCE THE CAMPAIGN BEGAN, THE MMM HAS SLIPPED A BIT. PEOPLE HAVE BEGUN TO EXAMINE THIS PARTY'S PROGRAM -- AND TO BE FRIGHTENED BY IT. THE LABEL OF "COMMUNISM" PINNED ON THIS PARTY DAILY BY BOTH THE PMSD AND THE IP HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL. THE IP HAS APPARENTLY OVERCOME THE FACTIONALISM AND DISSIDENCE WHICH PLAGUED IT IN THE WEEKS AFTER ELECTIONS WERE ANNOUNCED AND SEEMS TO BE ACHIEVING SOME MOMENTUM. THE PMSD HAS ALSO RALLIED ITS FORCES, THOUGH IT HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN MAKING INROADS BEYOND ITS TRADITIONAL CONSTITUENCY AMONG THE URBAN CREOLES AND THE FRANCO-MAURITIANS.

3. SEVERAL OF THE PROMINENT PARTY LEADERS MAY NOT MAKE IT INTO THE NEW ASSEMBLY. THE PMSD'S DUVAL, PARTLY AS A DISPLAY OF BRAVADO AND ALSO PERHAPS TO TEST HIMSELF, PICKED A DIFFICULT DISTRICT, HALF URBAN HALF RURAL, THAT HIS PARTY LOST TO LABOR IN 1967, AND IT APPEARS HE MAY LOSE HIS SEAT. PAUL BERENGER OF THE MMM WILL ALSO HAVE A MOST DIFFICULT TIME WINNING A SEAT IN THE QUATRE BORNES DISTRICT WHERE FOUR PARTIES ARE CONTENDING WITH STRONG SLATES. THE DISTRICT WAS WON LAST TIME BY THE PMSD, WHICH MAY WELL WIN IT AGAIN. THE IP HAS FIELDDED A YOUTHFUL TRIO, AND ONE SEAT MAY GO TO LESAGE OF THE UDM, WHO REPRESENTED THIS DISTRICT IN THE LAST ASSEMBLY. RAMGOOLAM SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE IN THE TRIOLET DISTRICT HE HAS REPRESENTED FOR MANY YEARS, AND THE SAME GOES FOR BISSOONDOYAL, LEADER OF THE IFB, RUNNING ONCE AGAIN IN HIS FIEF OF ROSE BELLE (WHERE BOTH THE PMSD AND THE UDM HAVE WITHDRAWN IN HIS FAVOR). OLLIVRY OF THE UDM HAS LITTLE CHANCE IN PORT LOUIS. DEV VIRAHSAWMY OF THE MMMSP, RUNNING IN RAMGOOLAM'S DISTRICT WHERE HE WON A STARTLING VICTORY AS THE MMM CANDIDATE IN 1970, IS A DARK HORSE. HAWOLDAR OF THE PSP IS PROBABLY ALSO A LOSER. SOME OF THE MAJOR PERSONALITIES OF RECENT MAURITIAN POLITICS MAY THEREFORE BE ABSENT FROM THE NEXT ASSEMBLY.

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4. THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE A GREAT MANY NEW FACES. ALL BUT TWO OR THREE OF THE MMM'S 60 CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING FOR THE FIRST TIME. ALL BUT ONE OF THE MMMSP'S 15 AND PRACTICALLY ALL OF THE PMSD'S CANDIDATES ARE NEW FACES. NEARLY HALF OF THE IP'S NATIONAL SLATE IS NEW. A FEW OF THE OLDER FACES HAVE DRIFTED TO THE UDM, THE IFB AND THE PSP, AND THEY HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF ELECTION UNDER THESE SMALL PARTY BANNERS. IN FACT, IT IS BEING SAID THAT MOST

OF THE INCUMBENT MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY, OF NO MATTER WHAT PARTY, FACE A DIFFICULT TIME GETTING RE-ELECTED, EITHER BECAUSE THEY ARE GUILTY OF HAVING NEGLECTED THEIR CONSTITUENCIES OR BECAUSE THERE IS A PERVASIVE HOSTILITY IN THE ELECTORATE AGAINST THE "INS" FOR HAVING FEATHERED THEIR OWN NESTS TO EXCESS.

5. NONE OF THE THREE BIG PARTIES SEEMS TO BE SUFFERING FINANCIALLY THOUGH THEY ARE ALL MAKING APPEALS FOR FUNDS AND DO NOT HESITATE TO ACCUSE THEIR OPPONENTS OF RECEIVING HELP FROM ABROAD OR FROM WEALTHY MAURITIANS. THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS APPARENTLY RESPONDED GENEROUSLY TO APPEALS FROM THE IP AND THE PMSD FOR FUNDS. THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND THE "HAVES" OF THE ISLAND IN GENERAL, SUPPORT BOTH LABOR AND THE PMSD AND DO NOT CARE WHICH COMES OUT AHEAD SO LONG AS TOGETHER THEY KEEP THE MMM FROM WINNING. IN FACT, THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD PREFER THAT NEITHER THE PMSD NOR THE IP WINS AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY, AS THEIR PREFERRED OUTCOME WOULD BE THE NECESSITY OF THESE TWO PARTIES FORMING A COALITION TO GOVERN THE COUNTRY. THE PRIVATE SECTOR DOES NOT LIKE ANY ONE PARTY TO BE TOO STRONG, AS IT WOULD NOT THEN NEED THEIR SUPPORT AND MIGHT TAKE "DANGEROUS" COURSES OF ACTION, THAT IS, MIGHT BECOME AS SOCIALIST AS THE POLITICIANS' RHETORIC.

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6. THE MMM FRIGHTENS THE "HAVES", THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND A GOOD DEAL OF THE MIDDLE CLASS AS WELL. THIS IN UNDER-
STANDABLE, IN VIEW OF THE PARTY'S PROGRAM, WHICH MOST
PEOPLE BELIEVE WOULD BE ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A RUST TOWARD

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPLETE STATE SOCIALISM, OR EVEN "COMMUNISM." THE MMM'S PUBLISHED PROGRAM CALLS FOR, AMONG OTHER THINGS: COMPLETE NATIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, OF THE DOCKS, OF ALL INSURANCE COMPANIES, OF LEASED TEA LANDS, OF THE IMPORT TRADE, OF FIVE SUGAR FACTORIES TOGETHER WITH THEIR LANDS, OF 20,000 ARPENTS OF LAND BELONGING TO OTHER SUGAR ESTATES, OF 51 PERCENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND 51 PERCENT OF THE HOTELS, PLUS BANKING MEASURES THAT WOULD CAUSE THE PRIVATE BANKS, WHICH ARE ALL FOREIGN, TO LIQUIDATE AND GO HOME. BUT EVEN MORE THAN THESE ECONOMIC MEASURES, MAURITIANS WITH A STAKE IN THE PRESENT ORDER FEAR THAT THE MMM HAS STRONGLY ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND TOTALITARIAN TENDENCIES AND WOULD DESTROY THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL FREEDOMS AND INSTITUTIONS IF IT EVER CAME TO POWER.

7. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE IP AND THE PMSD, THROUGH PRIVATE UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED BY PARTY LEADERS RAMGOOLAM AND DUVAL, HAVE MADE A TACIT AGREEMENT THAT WHILE THEY WILL FIGHT EACH OTHER IN THE CAMPAIGN THEY WILL DIRECT THEIR MAJOR ATTACK AGAINST THE MMM IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT THE MMM DOES NOT ACHIEVE A PLURALITY. THEN, IF THE OUTCOME DOES NOT GIVE EITHER THE IP OR THE PMSD A WORKING MAJORITY OF THE ASSEMBLY, THEY WILL RE-ESTABLISH THE COALITION THAT GOVERNED THE THE COUNTRY FROM 1969 TO 1973. THIS IS AN OUTCOME CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE PROPERTIED CLASSES GENERALLY WOULD LIKE TO SEE, TO BAR THE WAY TO THE MMM. THIS WOULD BE A WORKABLE ARRANGEMENT, FOR REGARDLESS OF HOW WELL THE MMM DOES, NO ONE EXPECTS IT TO WIN A MAJORITY, AND MOST FORECASTS GIVE THE IP AND THE PMSD COMBINED WELL OVER HALF OF THE ASSEMBLY SEATS.

8. IT WAS EARLIER THOUGHT THAT IF THE IP CAME IN FIRST THERE MIGHT BE A SPLIT WITHIN THE PARTY OVER WHETHER TO MAKE A COALITION WITH THE PMSD OR WITH THE MMM. BUT AS THE CAMPAIGN HAS PROGRESSED IT HAS BECOME FAIRLY CLEAR THAT A LABOR PARTY COALITION WITH THE MMM IS NEARLY OUT OF THE QUESTION. EVEN THE SO-CALLED "LEFT-WING" OF LABOR, LED BY RINGADOO, WALTER AND CHURBURRUN, HAS BEEN ATTACKING THE MMM IN THE STRONGEST TERMS AS A COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH WOULD DESTROY THE FREEDOMS ENJOYED BY MAURITIANS. FURTHERMORE, THE "RIGHT WING" LED BY BOOLELL AND JAGATSINGH MAY ELECT A LARGER NUMBER OF LABOR CANDIDATES THAN THE "LEFT WING." RAMGOOLAM PREFERS RINGADOO AS HIS SUCCESSOR, BUT THE "SMART MONEY" IS BETTING ON BOOLELL AND JAGATSINGH.

9. THREE PERSONALITIES DOMINATE THE CAMPAIGN JUST AS DO THE THREE PARTIES THEY LEAD. IT IS A GENERATIONAL CONTEST. RAMGOOLAM WAS BORN IN 1900; HIS LABOR PARTY, THE OLDEST,

DATES FROM THE MID-1930'S. DUVAL WAS BORN IN 1930; HIS PMSD PARTY, THE CHILD OF SEVERAL EVOLUTIONS, BECAME A CONTENDER IN THE 1950'S. BERENGER WAS BORN IN 1945, HIS PARTY IN 1969 IN THE AFTERMATH OF STUDENT-LED DEMONSTRATIONS CHARACTERISTIC OF THAT ERA. RAMGOOLAM IS 30 YEARS OLDER THAN DUVAL, WHO IS 15 YEARS OLDER THAN BERENGER. RAMGOOLAM HAS BEEN IN POLITICS FOR 40 YEARS, DUVAL FOR TWENTY, BERENGER FOR SEVEN.

10. TO START WITH THE YOUNGEST, BERENGER OF THE MMM IS YOUNG, INEXPERIENCED, DEDICATED, SERIOUS, AN EFFECTIVE SPEAKER, AN EVEN BETTER ORGANIZER. HE AROUSES SOME ADMIRATION FOR HIS DETERMINATION AND APPARENT CONCERN FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE WORKERS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE CAUSES FEAR BECAUSE HE IS CONSIDERED AN INFLEXIBLE IDEOLOGUE AND BY SOME AN OPPORTUNIST WHO SIMPLY WANTS TO REVENGE HIMSELF ON A SOCIETY WHICH DID NOT SATISFY HIS INTENSE PERSONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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AMBITIONS. HIS SUPPORTERS BELIEVE IN HIM AND HIS ENEMIES WOULD LIKE TO DESTROY HIM.

11. THE PMSD'S DUVAL IS AS CONTROVERSIAL AS EVER. HE HAS MANY ADMIRERS WHO DESCRIBE HIS AS EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT, OR AT LEAST QUICK AND CLEVER, A CONSUMMATE DEBATER, FIRST RATE CAMPAIGNER, BUT HE IS CRITICIZED FOR HIS EGOTISTICAL STYLE, HIS DISSOLUTENESS, HIS ASSOCIATION WITH DISREPUTABLE CHARACTERS, HIS LACK OF SERIOUSNESS, UNPREDICTABLY, INSTABILITY AND SOME SAY UNSCRUPULOUSNESS. TO HIS ADMIRERS, WHO ARE LEGION IN CERTAIN GROUPS AND CLASSES, HE IS STILL THE "KING OF THE CREOLES" AND HIS RALLY APPEARANCES AROUSE A LOT OF GENUINE ENTHUSIASM. SOME WHO DON'T LIKE HIS STYLE AND METHODS HOLD THEIR NOSES AND GIVE HIM SUPPORT AS THE STRONGEST FORCE AGAINST THE "COMMUNISTS" OF THE MMM. BUT HE IS THE MOST CHARISMATIC OF MAURITIAN POLITICIANS; WITHOUT HIM THE PMSD WOULD FADE TO INSIGNIFICANCE. HIS THIRTY-MINUTE TALK ON THE PMSD'S FIRST TV PROGRAM WAS A MASTERPIECE, AS DUVAL RANG CHANGES ON THE THEME OF "THIS IS GAETAN, YOUR OLDER BROTHER, I KNOW YOU, YOU KNOW ME, YOU TRUST ME, YOU COME TO SEE ME BY THE HUNDREDS EVERY DAY, EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT IN POWER, BECAUSE YOU KNOW I CAN HELP YOU, I KNOW WHAT MAURITIANS WANT BECAUSE I'M A MAURITIAN," AND SO FORTH.

12. IN MANY WAYS THIS CAMPAIGN IS A REFERENDUM ON THE LABOR PARTY'S IPERFORMANCE SINCE IT WON THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE ELECTIONS OF 1967 AND ON THE PERSON OF THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF. THE QUESTION THE VOTERS ARE DECIDING IS, SHOULD RAMGOOLAM BE GIVEN ONE MORE CHANCE, ONE MORE ELECTORAL

VICTORY, OR SHOULD HE BE RETIRED AGAINST HIS WISH. ONE HAS TO ADMIRE "THE OLD MAN", AS EVERYONE CALLS HIM, AT 76 YEARS OF AGE, NOT IN GOOD HEALTH, A LEADER WHO HAS DOMINATED HIS COUNTRY'S POLITICS FOR A DECADE AND A HALF, A TRUE DEMOCRAT AS WELL AS A TRUE SOCIALIST (AT LEAST IN PRINCIPLE IF NOT IN PRACTICE), WANTING ONE MORE VINDICATION AT THE POLLS FOR HIS PERFORMANCE SINCE INDEPENDENCE. IT IS SAID THAT HE POSTPONED ELECTIONS AS LONG AS HE COULD, AND ONLY HELD THEM NOW BECAUSE HE COULD AVOID THEM NO LONGER. NEVERTHELESS, HE IS COMMITTED TO DEMOCRACY AND IS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LEADER OF ONE OF THE FEW PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACIES STILL EXTANT IN THE THIRD WORLD, IN WHICH FREE ELECTIONS, OF A KIND THAT WOULD NOT BE FAULTED IN THE PUREST OF WESTERN DEMOCRACIES, ARE NOW BEING HELD.

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13. WHEN HE LED OFF THE POLITICAL BROADCASTS ON TV AT THE BEGINNING OF LAST WEEK, THE OLD MAN LOOKED HIS AGE, AND HE WAS TIRED. THE PAPERS SAID HE READ HIS SPEECH IN A MONOTONE, WHICH WAS A KIND DESCRIPTION. HE DOES NOT SPEAK CREOLE WELL, NOR FRENCH, AND HIS HINDI IS AN EMBASSASSMENT. HIS MIND IS NO LONGER AS SHARP AS IT WAS, HE RAMBLES A LOT. HE STILL HAS UNBELIEVABLE STAMINA, BUT HIS DOCTORS HAVE ORDERED HIM TO SLOW DOWN, AND HE HAS A BIT. HE PLAYS

THE ROLE OF "CHA CHA" (FATHER) TO HIS PEOPLE TO THE HILT AS HE CAMPAIGNS, BUT IT IS ABOUT THE ONLY ACT HE HAS. HE STOUTLY DEFENDS THE LABOR PARTY'S RECORD, AND IT IS A GOOD ONE, BUT MANY MAURITIANS STILL YEARN FOR CHANGE. RAM'S PARTY IS RIVEN BY FACTIONALISM, THERE ARE MANY INTENSELY AMBITIOUS LEADERS VYING FOR THE SUCCESSION, CHALLENGING EACH OTHER AND THEREFORE RAM'S CONTINUED CONTROL. ONE OFTEN HEARS THESE DAYS THAT THE OLD MAN IS LOSING HIS GRIP, IS SLOWING DOWN, IS FALTERING, HAS LOST HIS TOUCH.

14. IT IS A WONDER THT HE WOULD RISK HIS GOOD REPUTATION BY PLACING IT ON THE LINE IN THESE ELECTIONS, WHICH HE CAN BY NO MEANS CONTROL. HE COULD NOT RESIST THE CLAMOR FOR ELECTIONS, WHICH CAME AS LOUDLY FROM THOSE IN HIS OWN PARTY WHO WISH TO SUCCEED HIM AS FROM HIS POLITICAL ENEMIES WHO WISH TO DRIVE HIM FROM POWER EVEN BEFORE HE CAN RETIRE.

15. RAMGOOLAM HAS A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING. THERE HAS BEEN ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND THERE HAS BEEN POLITICAL STABILITY. THE PARTY'S RECORD IS A GOOD ONE. IN HOW MANY
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THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ARE THE POOR BETTER OFF TODAY THAN THEY WERE NINE YEARS AGO? IN HOW MANY WOULD TWO-THIRDS OF THOSE RESPONDING IN A PUBLIC OPINION POLL SAY THEY ARE NOW BETTER OFF THAN THEY WERE AT INDEPENDENCE? IN HOW MANY THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WOULD OR COULD SUCH A POLL BE TAKEN AND THE RESULTS PUBLISHED IN AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER? BY ALL RIGHTS THE OLD MAN'S LABOR PARTY SHOULD WIN A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, BUT IT IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT IT WILL.

16. WHAT ARE THE PEOPLE'S COMPLAINTS? THERE HAVE BEEN CORRUPTION, NEPOTISM, FAVORITISM -- TRUE. THE PARTY HAS BEEN GUILTY OF COMMUNALISM, OF HELPING HINDUS FIRST AND EVERYONE ELSE SECOND. AS THE PARTY OF THE WORKERS, SUPPOSEDLY, IT HAS WORKED HARDER TO PUT A LOT OF HINDUS ON TOP, RATHER THAN HELPING ALL THE WORKERS GET AHEAD. IT HAS BEEN A LOT LESS SOCIALIST THAN ITS PROMISES. THERE HAS BEEN A GOOD DEAL OF COLLUSION WITH THE "CAPITALISTS" TO PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS AND IN FACT TO JOIN THEIR CLASS, TO THE NEGLECT OF THE DISADVANTAGED.

17. SO THE PICTURE IS MIXED. BUT AT A TIME WHEN OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS ARE PROCLAIMING THEMSELVES PRESIDENTS FOR LIFE AND EVEN EMPERORS, IT IS HEARTENING TO OBSERVE AS MODEST A MAN AS RAMGOOLAM CAMPAIGNING ON HIS RECORD OF HAVING GIVEN THE COUNTRY PROSPERITY, STABILITY, INDEPENDENCE AND RESPECT ABROAD. HE RULES OVER A COUNTRY IN WHICH THERE IS MORE POLITICAL VIOLENCE DURING AN ELECTION THAN ANYONE WOULD WISH BECAUSE THE POLICE ARE SO RESTRAINED.

18. THE LABOR PARTY CONTINUES TO ENJOY STRONG SUPPORT IN THE HINDU COMMUNITY, THOUGH MANY YOUNGER VOTERS ARE ATTRACTED BY THE PROMISES OF CHANGE OF THE MMM. LABOR ALSO ENJOYS FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE STEADY, RELIABLE AND MODERATE WAY IT HAS RULED THE COUNTRY SINCE INDEPENDENCE. BUT AS A PARTY WHICH HAS BEEN IN POWER A LONG TIME IT IS LACKING IN DYNAMISM AND IN INNOVATIVE IDEAS; IT HAS A STODGY IMAGE AND IT APPEARS TO LACK THE ABILITY TO REVITALIZE ITSELF WITH NEW PERSONALITIES AND A NEW PROGRAM. IT IS CAUGHT IN THE DILEMMA OF RISKING THE ALIENATION OF ITS TRADITIONAL SUPPORTERS IF IT REALLY PURGES ITSELF, AND YET WITHOUT
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SUCH A CLEANSING IT IS HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME ATTRACTING THE NEW AND YOUNGER VOTERS (ESTIMATED TO BE UPWARDS OF 40 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE). IT HAS RETIRED SOME OF THE OLD WAR-HORSES AND OFFERED SOME NEW FACES, BUT PERHAPS NOT ENOUGH. AS IS HIS HABIT, RAMGOOLAM COMPROMISED BY KEEPING ON MOST OF HIS OLD ASSOCIATES WHILE DROPPING ENOUGH TO THEM TO MAKE WAY FOR SOME NEW BLOOD. HE IS MAKING SOMETHING OF A GAMBLE, HOWEVER, AS THE NEW FACES ARE RUNNING MOSTLY IN DISTRICTS WHERE LABOR IS NOT LIKELY TO DO WELL, WHILE THE "SAFE" DISTRICTS ARE RESERVED FOR THE INCUMBENTS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE ANTAGONIZED THE VOTERS ENOUGH TO HAVE THEM WANT TO "THROW THE RASCALS OUT."

19. RAMGOOLAM AND DUVAL HAVE MADE REPEATED PUBLIC DENIALS THAT THEY HAVE MADE AN AGREEMENT TO FORM A COALITION. THESE STATEMENTS ARE GOOD CAMPAIGN TACTICS BUT THEY ARE LACKING IN CANDOR. IT IS KNOWN THAT THEY HAVE HAD SEVERAL PRIVATE MEETINGS JUST BEFORE AND DURING THE CAMPAIGN. WHILE THEY HAVE NOT MADE AN ALLIANCE TO DIVIDE UP THE ELECTORATE AND THE SEATS (WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN FEASIBLE SINCE THE IP IS STRONG IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, AS THE PMSD IS IN THE TOWNS) THEY ARE IN AT LEAST TACIT AGREEMENT TO AIM THEIR HEAVY ARTILLERY MUTUALLY AGAINST THE "COMMUNIST" THREAT POSED BY THE MMM. THEY ARE ALSO DOUBTLESS IN AGREEMENT THAT THE MMM MUST BE KEPT OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH MEANS ONLY ONE THING: THAT THEY MUST GET TOGETHER TO FORM THE GOVERNMENT IF NEITHER ONE OF THEIR TWO PARTIES IS STRONG ENOUGH TO FORM IT ALONE.

20. THE SOLE IMPONDERABLE WITH GRAVE IMPLICATIONS THEREFORE REMAINS: CAN THE MMM BE KEPT FROM WINNING A MAJORITY OF THE SEATS, IT BEING LOGICAL TO SUPPOSE THAT IF THE MMM FAILS TO WIN A MAJORITY, THE IP AND THE PMSD TOGETHER SURELY WILL. THE ANSWER WILL BE GIVEN BY THE VOTERS ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 20.

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